

Some parents elect to continue their school-year plan during vacation periods, while others establish a different schedule during the child's vacations.

Sample Vacation Options

Some parents wish to establish in their parenting plan a set period, such as two-weeks of uninterrupted time so that each parent can take a vacation with the child.

Vacations may offer children who live in one home primarily during the school year important opportunities to spend time with the other parent.

Sample 1 - During the child's off-track periods, the parents alternate weeks of custodial responsibility with the exchange to occur on Friday evening.

Sample 2 - During the child's summer vacation, the parents reverse the custodial plan so that the child is residing primarily in the home of the parent with whom he had less time during the school year.

As children mature, however, they also have interests and activities such as camp or summer school and parents may wish to ensure that the children can continue to participate in these activities.

Sample 1 - The parents agree to maintain the child's regular attendance at a selected program and build the summer or off-track plan around that activity.

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY AND VACATION PLAN STRESS FREE

- Include a start and end date and time. For example, if both parents are sharing winter break, make sure to include the day and time of the exchange.
- Consider your child's school schedule in planning the return dates after holidays and vacations. Children often need time to settle in before returning to school from less structured activities.
- Be prompt and stick to the schedule.
- Help your child keep in touch with both of you. If your child is with you, provide him/her the opportunity to send a card, or to call or email the other parent. When your child is not with you, make sure that you write, email or telephone whether or not your child does so.
- Coordinate gift-giving. Help your child select or make a card or gift for the other parent and extended family.
- Create new traditions and ways to celebrate holidays and birthdays.

For copies of this and other brochures in the "Creating a Parenting Plan" series, contact Family Court Services at (213) 830-0835

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Creating A Parenting Plan

Holiday and Vacation Options



FAMILY COURT SERVICES



THE IMPORTANCE OF A HOLIDAY AND VACATION SCHEDULE

The best parenting plan is one created by parents that meets the unique needs of the children and the parents. A key part of any parenting plan is how special days and school vacations will be handled when parents are not living together. Holidays and vacations often offer children opportunities to deepen ties to extended family, to share in family traditions and to enjoy the company of their parents without the demands of work and school. When these important occasions are not included in a family's parenting plan, the family may experience more stress at these times as they struggle to agree on a way of sharing at the last minute. As tension between the parents mounts, the children are often drawn into the controversy and what could have been positive experiences become tainted by memories of conflict and anger. On the other hand, when parents can tell their children reassuringly about how special times will be shared, the children experience a sense of safety and security.

In most parenting plans, holidays and vacation periods take priority over the regular schedule. This brochure describes some factors to consider in planning for holidays and vacations.

Will holidays be divided or alternated?

Divided – Parents split the holiday itself or the holiday weekend. This option may be particularly suitable for young children.

Sample of Split Holiday:

Parent A - 9 AM to 3 PM

Parent B - 3 PM to 9 PM

Sample of Split Holiday Weekend:

Parent A - Friday, 6 PM to Saturday, 6 PM

Parent B - Saturday, 6 PM to Sunday, 6 PM

Alternated – Parents alternate holidays every year.

Sample of Alternated Holidays:

In even-numbered years, the children are with Parent A on Holidays 1 and 3 and with Parent B on Holidays 2 and 4.

In odd-numbered years, the children are with Parent B on Holidays 1 and 3 and with Parent A on Holidays 2 and 4.

What are other holiday options?

Regular Schedule - Parents make no special provisions for holidays and follow their regular parenting schedule; the children then celebrate holidays with whomever they are residing at the time.

Monday Holidays - Parents provide that a legal or school holiday occurring on a Monday will extend the weekend 24 hours to include the holiday.

Sample Holiday Schedule

Having in mind which holidays are important to you and how you wish to share them will increase your likelihood of agreeing on a plan with the other parent. See sample below:

HOLIDAY	TIME	EVEN YRS	ODD YRS
New Year's Eve/Day	12/31 at 6 PM until 1/1 at 6 PM	Dad	Mom
Child's Birthday	After school until 8 PM	Mom	Dad
4 th of July	7/4 at 10 AM until 7/5 at 10 AM	Dad	Mom
Thanksgiving Weekend	Wednesday after school until Sunday at 6 PM	Mom	Dad
Hanukkah First Night	To be arranged	Dad	Mom
Hanukkah Last Night	To be arranged	Mom	Dad
Christmas Eve	12/24 at 10 AM until 12/25 at 10 AM	Dad	Mom
Christmas Day	12/25 at 10 AM until 12/26 at 10 AM	Mom	Dad

How will you provide for your child's vacation time from school?

First consider your child's school schedule and whether he or she is on a "traditional" schedule with a long summer break and brief breaks in the Winter and Spring or on a "track" schedule where there may be several longer breaks throughout the year.